

**PRICE THREEPENNY**

PORT MACQUARIE.—The JESSIE, THURSDAY EVENING. O'Dowd and Co., Commercial Wharf.

FOR BRISBANE.—The schooner WAVE of LIFE, Captain Hannah, will have immediate dispatch. For freight or passage apply on board; or to HENRY CLARKE, Victoria Wharf.

JOHN A. MATHEWS, Provincial Grand Master,  
Provincial Grand Secretary.

**VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY.—No. 5 BATTERY.**  
A MEETING of the members of the above Battery  
will be held at the Brigade Office, THIS (Friday) EVEN-  
ING, at 8 o'clock sharp. Business of Importance.

HENRY J. PEAT, Honorary Secretary.

**N**O PLASTERERS.—TENDERS required for PLASTERING TWO Four-roomed HOUSES—labour only. Apply on the work, Edward-street, South Head Road.

**B**ILLET WOOD, Palings, Posts and Rails, and Slabs, on SALE. b. GRAHAM, Auctioneer, Sydney Railway Terminus.

**M**AL and BARLEY, in 1-cwt. casks, very superior, for SALE, MASON, BROTHERS, Queen's-place.

**I**RON TANKS for SALE, each 400 gallons. H. S. BIRD, Circular Quay.

**F**OR SALE, DRAY COVERS and TARPAULINS, all sizes, WILLIS, MERREY, and LLOYD.

**D**AMAGED CORN.—Damaged CORN, slightly damaged, very cheap. J. CLARK, Market Wharf.

**R**ASS HAY, for packing, sound and cheap. J. CLARK, Market Wharf.

**C**OFFEE roasted and ground; Pepper and Spices ground and dressed, at REDGATE'S Mills, Westbloomfield.

000 delivery given on the station (Darling Downs) before the 1st October. For further particulars apply THOMAS DAWSON, Auctioneer and Cattle Salesman, George-street, Sydney.

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000 STORE CATTLE, for SALE, mixed sexes in the Liverpool Plains district, delivery given on demand. Apply to THOMAS DAWSON, Auctioneer, and Cattle Salesman, &c., 432, George-street, Sydney.







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## MENTAL RIPENESS.

It is a matter of very common observation that men are wont to give up their game of life too easily, or, to put it in another way, to lower their aims and choose the less worthy prizes after an insufficient essay to reach the higher objects which at first, and justly, they thought best worth having. They are too willing to think that their character has crystallized, that they have somehow found their way into a groove which their age and circumstances forbid them to exchange for another. In this sense men are always inclined to fancy themselves older than they are, and every year is, not without a certain feeling of relief, made to count for two. A man of five-and-thirty, looking at the chances of his animal life, commonly takes a cheerful and expansive view of the future in that respect, but if you discourse to him upon higher moral purposes, wider intellectual sympathies, new and varied pursuits, he replies as if the book of his life were instantly on the point of being sealed and made up. The opportunity of adding new pages he holds to be for ever vanished. He sighs, "Ah, si jeunesse savait," and tacitly surrenders his earlier aspirations, content, as he thinks, to renew them in his children, or forced, as he thinks, by compulsion of circumstance, to bend his mind to the grosser but more urgent needs of daily life, and so to allow the old flame to go flickering out. Even upon unutilized persons the conviction has a very evil influence, that it is too late to take any trouble about extending the mental outlook any time after the first days of youth. But it is among the comparatively few cultivated people that the mischief is greatest of supposing that one has got too far on in life, too firmly set in certain paths, to make any change, or to attempt new courses. Those whose aspirations would be most likely to run in a direction that would instruct and delight their fellows are just those whom indolence or diffidence constantly tempts to think themselves too old to make any deliberate effort to realise their dreams. And friends not seldom fancy they are playing the friendliest part by pouring into a man's ear warnings that the cobble should stick to his last, that by attempting too much he will do nothing, that what might have been well if begun early cannot be other than ill when begun later, with a thousand other terse and specious forms of the doctrine—which may be good in matters of belief, but is certainly not good in matters of conduct—that you should never interfere with a quiet *status quo*. One would suppose that youth was not only the seed-time, but the chief season for harvest as well, and that, as far as ideas and hopes are concerned, there is no more growth, no further ripening and mellowing. We often discover this gross fallacy in talk about literature, and especially about the more imaginative kinds of literature. The common theory among superficial persons appears to be that the mind gets a distinct set, or ply, or twist in youth, and that in this nature means it to stay. Choose your subject or your line, they say, as early as you can, and then let nothing divert you from its single pursuit; just for all the world as if expanding and enriching and proving one's mind were like keeping a retail shop, or making a fortune as a huckster. The gradual development of the tastes, the slow growth of those intellectual preferences which are sure to come in every character that has any original fertility and is wisely tended, are processes for which little allowance is made, either by the individual who is eager for the result, or by the world at large, which not unnaturally concerns itself with results only, and scarcely at all with the silent ways and invisible means. This slow-climbing patience is particularly hard and unwelcome, because the necessity for it comes fresh upon men after the easy golden visions of youth. Inexperience serves to spread a luminous haze over the future, through which all seems bright and delightfully accessible, and then, when it is proved that the haze concealed, not grassy slopes, but rocky and toilsome heights, patience becomes doubly and trebly hard to practise. The poet, in the prologue to "Faust," looks back with desire upon the times when he was "still forming," when he had "nothing and yet enough; the longing after truth and the pleasure in delusion." As the friendly Merryman reprovingly reminds him, youth is very well in dealing with foes, or "when the loveliest of lasses cling with ardour round your neck;" "but to strike the familiar lyre with spirit and grace, to sweep along with happy wanderings towards a self-appointed aim—such is the task your ripened age imposes."

Literature, like much else, suffers heavily at the present age from the excess of haste to reach certain ends. The modern theory of ripened age is that it is the time to sit down and enjoy the fruits that have been earned by the crude labours of immature years. The days of long schooling and sedulous preparation are for the present at an end, except in rare cases. Most of the poets of the rising generation, for instance, and most of the novelists of the generation that is, are afraid of their imagination fading away before they have had time to make the most of it; or else they feel confident that, if they were to study history or philosophy, or anything else that demands close attention, they would be quenching their inventive faculty. The imagination, it seems, will only thrive amid the ruins of reason and judgment, and in the nourishing air of ignorance, which, elsewhere so pestilential, is here oddly enough supposed to be salubrious. Instead of being content with the ordinary laws of intellectual as of other kinds of growth—first the leaf, then the blossom, then the fruit—these over-hasty souls insist on bursting into full fruition at their first impulse. Suppose they fail a little; suppose what they vow to be the richest and ripest of the world finds only "berries harsh and crude," then it is the world that falls into disgrace. The fault is with the world that so shamefully insists on knowing nothing of its greatest men, and not at all with the too brilliant creatures who insist they have had any time either to weigh the things that are best worth writing and painting, or to grasp the mastery of all the many ingredients that enter into good workmanship. Wiser than these, but still unwise, are those others who, though shrewd enough to perceive that patience and silence and long culture are the invariably antecedents of the best work, too recklessly conclude that they do not possess the native capacity for patience, and that this is a capacity which a man with the cares of the world upon him cannot expect to acquire. Men injudiciously think that a recognition of the difficulties which stand in the way of an achievement is the first condition of overcoming them. So it is, provided a man does not recognise them with such graphic and striking force as to be disheartened from attempting the achievement altogether. A weak diffidence has done the world as much harm as a rash confidence, and these are the two points between which an unseasoned mind is apt to wander, doing nothing except hoping

alternately too much and too little, feeling itself too great and too small.

The patience which ripens the mind and fits it for many interests and great compositions is no inactive waiting for something that will come of itself. Poetry is not, as has been humorously said, secreted in the duodenum. Passive star-gazing, pleasant expectation of the divine afflatus, does not ensure any practical result; and a man may look hard into the fire, or up into the heavens, or keenly around on his kind, or wherever he seeks to woo his own particular Muse, without ever getting an idea or an image that is worth the trouble of retaining or describing. A state of slow but never-staying fermentation, in which everything that enters the mind is transformed and assimilated, and which is constantly keeping the mind exercised in search after new images—this is the condition of those who have escaped an innate lethargy of soul, and who have not allowed the early growths of good sense to be choked by the tares of excessive worldly business. Not that total immunity from this business is by any means a desirable auxiliary to the ripening process. Some of the very best work in the sphere of ideas has been done by men habitually occupied in the sphere of affairs. But the pressure which chokes the finer out-shoots of character is that of the necessities of a dependent family, of a traditional kind of desire to make a great deal of money, of expensive habits which require much merely mercenary labour to pay for them. It is the excess of business carried on under severe pressure of this or any other external kind which is so fatal to a large and serene internal activity. For there is all the difference in the world, in point of general fruitfulness, between this serene activity and a vain fussiness or feverish agitation. This is one reason among many why the earlier part of life is least favourable to all the choicest and highest sorts of artistic production. By serenity we do not mean necessarily happiness or comfort. A man may be serenely miserable, and perhaps this is the mood to which the world is indebted for some of those works which it would least willingly let die. But sorrowful composure is altogether removed alike from the anguish which bites and stings, and from the small cares which vex and fret and worry. In the earlier years this kind of composure is almost impossible, except in the case of the born prig, whose emotions and passions were all formed and shaped and set in decent order, finally and once for all, before he came into the world. It is not till experience and observation have in a measure rubbed away from things their exciting newness that a man is able to ascend the heights of reflection, and view them all, not with indifference, but without any fiery perturbation or discomposure.

There is one quality which marks in common both a very ripe and a very unripe mind of a certain stamp—a readiness, namely, to turn with elation to all sorts of subjects. But it requires no words to point out the difference between these two forms of versatility. It is not to be discouraged in any case, because a variety of interests, however thin and superficial they may be, is incalculably to be preferred to lethargic loitering over one dull little bit of ground. Hence the folly of people who pride themselves on a prudence, too charitably so-called, which consists in tethering their interests to some one post, personal or professional, political or theological, and who demand with more or less force that everybody else with whom they think they ought to have influence should confine himself within the same bounds. But the man who has lived long enough, and long enough in the right way, to make himself vigorous on many sides, and agile in many situations, has not been affected by the considerations which weigh decisively with persons who lack the courage, and still more the patience, to let character ripen naturally, without excessive eagerness to force it too rapidly or too narrowly in a given direction, or to stop its growth at a given height. He feels that time and industry and the maintenance of a thoroughly open mind all round are sure to end well, and to give him that deep knowledge of his own strong places which is essential to anything like making the best of himself. If he had been impelled by the hurry of the age, and by ill-advancing counsellors, to submit to a process of forcing, he could never have got this knowledge, and his life would have been by so much the more savourless. The consciousness, however, that some of the best work in every department is done by men who ripened late does not prevent him from sighing over the lapse of the years that intervene. Milton, who saw the good of not choosing a subject too soon, and of beginning late, could wonder at three-and-twenty whether "some more timely-happy spirits" were riper than his own:

My best days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom sheweth.  
Perhaps my semblance may deceive the truth,  
But that is all that manhood can achieve so near.

And inward ripeness doth much less appear.  
Industrious waiting will not make Milton, but it improves the chances.—Saturday Review, June 26.

## TRAVELLING IN MEXICO.

(FROM A LETTER IN 1864-5, BY W. H. BULLOCK.)  
Now the question rises, how to slow away our numerous party of Don Antonio Escandon was not returning to Mexico unattended. The Don himself had stayed behind at Vera Cruz, and was to follow on the morrow with the bearer of his privy purse—late Minister of Justice in Miramon's Cabinet—and the light division of his retinue. The heavy division, to which I found myself attached, consisted of Don Vicente Escandon, Don Antonio's brother, the Donna Catalina, and her five young children—the youngest, a baby in arms, Carlotta, to whom the Empress had given her name, a very paragon of a baby, for it was never once heard to cry from the day we left Southampton to the day we reached Mexico. Then there were two Mexican Indian maids with a wonderful capacity for making the most delicious chocolate at odd times, and a French *bonne*, who condescended one day by declaring her opinion that England must be a miserable country to live in, because the land was entirely in the hands of the rich. Then there was the English governess, the English valet, the French tutor, and the Spanish financial secretary, with his wife, daughter, and two sons, the whole in charge of Mr. Grandison, of Orizaba, aided by a French courier endowed with a genius for contriving sumptuous repasts in wild places. The Belgian gardener, the English coachman and groom, with four horses and two terriers, were to follow, by slow stages. Finally, a Spanish *hidalgo* in reduced circumstances was to bring up the rear, with the conveyance of wagons in which the heavy baggage was stowed away. After holding a council of war, it was decided to convert one of the diligences into a nursery, which arrangement met with very general approbation, and by dint of close packing, the other diligences were got to hold the rest of the party. However, being anxious to see a little

more of the country than would be feasible from the inside of a diligence, I gladly availed myself of the offer of one of our hosts to lend me a horse to ride. The beast, however, had to be caught and a "moro," or farm servant, was sent into the bush with a lasso for the purpose. In the meantime the diligences set off without me, so I had nothing for it but to resign myself to a second glass of whiskey and water, and the amusing conversation of my host whom, from his way of talking, I once set down for an Irishman, but learnt afterwards that he was a British Canadian. In the course of conversation he informed me that, previous to undertaking the contract for the railway, on which he was then engaged, he had edited an English newspaper in Mexico, called the *Mexican Extraordinary*, which, under the circumstances, I could not help thinking an admirable name, for no ordinary journal could have a ghost of a chance of success in a country where English is so little read or understood. The *Mexican Extraordinary*, of course, turned out a failure, and so the ex-newspaper editor took to railway making. My host informed me that, having lately received insulting letters from the railway superintendent, he had taken the liberty of giving the fellow a horse-whipping, which had unfortunately brought the French authorities down about his ears. For that, instead of calling him out like a man, the cowardly superintendent had gone and told Colonel Marchal, the French commandant at Vera Cruz. Now, as ill-luck would have it, my host had unfortunately already incurred the displeasure of this gallant officer by opposing himself to a little plan by which the colonel thought to immortalise himself. For it appears that, struck by the impropriety of the name "La Soledad," "the waste," for the spot which, from its salubrious position, the French had selected for their headquarters in that unhealthy district, Colonel Marchal had entertained the ambitious project of changing its name from "La Soledad" to "Marchal," and had actually obtained the requisite authorisation from the Government. None the less, however, my host would insist in calling the place "La Soledad." Here, then, was the colonel's opportunity, and he was not slow to profit by it. For, summoning his Nubian myrmidons around him, he at once ordered an express train, and proceeded in high dudgeon to Camaron to wreak his vengeance on him who had had the audacity to oppose his ambitious scheme. Arrived at Camaron, the infuriated colonel, at once marched to the enemy's quarters, where he found his foe, and arrested him on the charge of disturbing the public peace. Then, forcing his prisoner into the train, he carried him off to Vera Cruz, and threw him into prison. The matter, however, coming to the ears of Mr. Ledward, the English consul, representations were made in the proper quarter, and, at the expiration of two or three days, an order was sent down from Mexico by telegraph to release the prisoner at once. On my suggesting to my host that his life at Camaron could hardly be an agreeable one, exposed as he was on the one hand to the insults of the authorities, and on the other to the constant danger of falling a victim to the deadly climate of the *Tierra Caliente*, like a second Mark Tapley, he would not admit for a moment that he had any thing to complain of, declaring with some warmth that his life was a very jolly one. At this point our conversation was broken in upon by the arrival of a couple of hot and dusty English engineers, who had ridden down from Orizaba on their way to Vera Cruz to meet some friends, who had just arrived from England. On their road down these gentlemen had encountered the *cortege* of the Nuncio, which the sight of their revolvers had thrown into a state of great alarm. Being taken by the escort for brigands, they were at once arrested and brought before the Nuncio, on one of the latter's servants, like a second Mark Tapley, he being discharged. In the meantime my steel had been left in captivity, and was brought round to the door fully caparisoned with the bristling saddle which I had brought out from England. The poor little beast—for it was nothing more than a pony—seemed quite crushed by the amount of trappings which hung about him a world too big for his slender proportions. Listening to the advice of my London saddler, I had provided myself with every conceivable article of saddlework which could be required on a riding tour in a hilly country. In addition to saddle and bridle, my pony was rigged out with crupper; valise, with pad to prevent the valise from galling the animal's back; a pair of enormous holsters, one to hold pistols, the other fitted with a tin to hold water; a hunting breast-plate, to prevent the saddle slipping off behind, while going up steep places; and, finally, a long halter wound round his neck. This last article gave the beast so forlorn an appearance, that it looked for all the world as if it had been mercifully added to provide the animal with a means of putting an end to his existence by hanging, should life become a burden to him. On such a beast and so accoutred I launched forth alone into the wilds in pursuit of the diligences. My road lay across a level plain overgrown with dwarf acacia and low underwood quite incapable of affording any kind of shade—the whole as uninteresting a tract of country as one could wish to ride over. The heat, too, became oppressive, and I began to regret having declined a seat in the diligences. However, I was drawing nigh to the hills, which lay stretched out before me, clothed to their very tops with a dense matted vegetation. From time to time the stony track, dignified by the name of road, which I was following, suddenly dived down into a deep gully, called in Mexico "baranca," of which the banks are so abrupt that you have no notice of them till you find yourself pulled up on the brink. At the bottom of these barrancas you generally find a sluggish, muddy stream, blocked up with boulders, on which scantily-clad Indian women may be often seen kneeling, and going through the form of washing their clothes. Whether Mexicans are by nature brigands, or whether they are tempted to become so by the configuration of the country, I will not presume to decide. But this much is certain, that no country in the world could be more admirably adapted for this purpose than Mexico. The sides of these barrancas, which are for the most part densely wooded, are the favourite lurking-place of brigands, and just as the beggars used to avail themselves of the steepness of the hill at Arica, as Juvenal tells us, up which brigands could only go at a foot pace, so Mexican brigands spring out upon their prey, as they begin to climb the opposite bank of the barranca. Having been informed at Vera Cruz that this portion of the *Tierra Caliente* was infested by "guerrilleros," I was in constant expectation of falling in with them, and when I came suddenly upon a party of wild-looking horsemen, I gave myself up for lost. When I learnt that these fellows were Mexican lancers, and had formed part of the escort of the Nuncio, I was lost in astonishment that such slovenly ill-conditioned looking villains could make a pretence of belonging to any army in the world.

A fifteen mile ride, which I accomplished in two hours and a half, brought me to Paso del Macho, a small town at the foot of the hills. Here, to my no small satisfaction, I found the diligences drawn up in front of the inn—the very inn at the entrance of which a few weeks before the regular diligence had stopped with the driver shot dead upon the box. It was now 3 p.m., and I rode, the next possible sleeping place, being, owing to the infamous state of the roads, at least five hours distant, it was decided to pass the night at Paso del Macho, and accordingly we took possession of the whole of the inn, which was kept by a very knowing fellow, who was reported to have made a fortune as captain of a slave. To explain his present position, he informed me that, although he had plenty of money to live upon anywhere, he could not stand a do-nothing life, and had set up as a Mexican innkeeper simply as a means of amusing himself. However, whatever his past history may have been, it soon became evident that the fellow understood his business, for, to the general surprise of us all, who had been prepared for any amount of roughing it on the road, we found our dinner spread with an air of taste and luxury that would have done credit to a Parisian restaurant. If the dinner itself did not quite reach the excellence of the *Café Riche* or *Les Trois Frères*, it was wonderfully good considering all things, and the champagne was first-rate. Nor do I think the bill of £20, which included the board and lodging of the whole party, was under the circumstances extravagant. The lodging, however, turned out very inferior to the board, which was altogether an exceptional phenomenon at a Mexican roadside inn. As we had to get up at 3 a.m., we thought it prudent to retire early; so, after a stroll in the town, during which we strolled upon a telegraph office in a street which was like a ploughed field, to bed we went at 9 p.m., but not to sleep, for what with rats, mosquitos, and jackals, it was well nigh impossible to close one's eyes. After a night spent in continual dread lest the huge black rats, which chased one another wildly about the room, should get into one's bed, and in listening to the whining bark of the jackals outside, it was a relief when the "moro" appeared with a light, and declared it was time to get up. By 4 a.m. we had swallowed the chocolate, without which no Mexican ever thinks of making a start, and soon after the diligences rolled away into the darkness. I mounted my pony and followed, but to my dismay the diligences, after floundering through the mud for about a hundred yards, suddenly went off in opposite directions, leaving me in the mire, and strangely perplexed to know which to follow. For the moment I thought that my pony and I would have been quite overwhelmed in the mud, but the little beast made a gallant and successful effort to extricate himself, and I started off in pursuit of the diligences which had last disappeared in the darkness. As soon as I came up with it the driver applied to me to inform him what had become of the other diligences—a piece of information which I was utterly unable to afford. So we had nothing for it but to halt till daylight. Soon after day had dawned the second diligence joined us, and all went on comparatively smoothly. We had now fairly commenced the ascent of the hills leading to the *Tierra Templada*, or temperate region, in which Cordova and Orizaba are both situated. The heat, however, was by no means tempered, for the sun scorched us more unmercifully than the preceding day as we toiled up the steep zig-zags of the Chiquihuite Pass—a well-known position in the annals of Mexican warfare. Cannon—eloquent of past struggles—were still lying by the roadside, half overgrown by the rank vegetation. As we stood gazing at the view from the summit of the pass, the torrent roaring a thousand feet below us, Mr. G. remarked to me that, from his painful experience of the deadliness of the climate, he could affirm with certainty, that of the labourers who were about to commence the work of carrying the railway through the pass, but a very small percentage would be alive at the end of the period requisite to complete the undertaking. The Chiquihuite is the pass behind which the allies bound themselves to retire in case the peace negotiations should break down, when the Mexican Government allowed them to pass unmolested to take up a more healthy position in the hills. It is only fair to add that in this instance the French did keep their word to the letter, in spite of the unfairness and dishonesty which characterised their first proceedings in Mexico. Strange to say, no opposition was offered to their second passage. From Chiquihuite to Potrero the road is so bad that in the rainy season the diligences are sometimes compelled to cease running for a month together; and men and mules are not unfrequently overwhelmedled in the slush. Colonel Van der Smissee, of the Belgian legion, whom I met subsequently in Mexico, informed me that on their march up to the capital some of his men had actually been forced to resort to swimming to save their lives. So notoriously infamous is one portion of the road that it has been christened "Salis pudes," "get out of it if you can." Get out of it our diligences did, but how they managed it will be to me for ever a mystery. After five hours' toiling through a forest jungle, along what I sincerely hope to be the most excruciating high road in the world, we at length emerged into the open, where, surrounded by a magnificent amphitheatre of hills, stands the struggling hacienda of Potrero. Here, under a battalion of the 99th French regiment of the line encamped upon the grass in front of the hacienda, engaged upon their midday meal, which the officers were enjoying at a table spread under the portico of the hacienda. The colonel, who was exceedingly affable, informed us that he was on his march to Vera Cruz, to re-embark his men for France.

## VERA CRUZ.

WHAT little life of any sort exists at Vera Cruz, is divided between the market-place and the theatre for even plague-stricken Vera Cruz has its theatre. A stroll through the market in the morning "liquoring-up" in the afternoon, and a visit to the theatre in the evening—these are the excitements of the day at Vera Cruz. In the market-place the traveller will enjoy a favourable opportunity of observing at his leisure the true type of Mexican Indian—the copper-coloured skin, the high cheekbones, low forehead, the small slits, which do duty for eyes, and the straight black hair. The first thing that strikes you about these Indians is their extreme squalor and poverty-stricken appearance. If, however, disregarding their miserable exterior, you watch them more nearly, you can scarcely fail to be struck by a certain amount of refinement, and gentleness of manner, which seem at once to raise them above the negro, from whom they are also readily distinguished by their wiry slender build, and by the melancholy air, which seems so innate in them that they can hardly shake it off in the fits of drunkenness which are habitual

with most of them. Only in the remote outlying provinces of the empire are the Indians of the savage scalping sort. In the accessible parts of the country, luckily for the rest of the population, of which the pure Indians make up nearly two-thirds, they are of the most part harmless, and only dangerous when their passions are excited by the priests, who exercise an extraordinary influence over them. As a rule, the Indians take no part nor interest in politics, though from time to time they follow the chiefs of their own, such as Mejia, Lora, and Alvarez into the field. As for what is sold in the market-place, I will at once confess myself quite incompetent to enumerate the names of the strange fruits and vegetables, which are produced in lavish profusion by the tropical heat of the surrounding *Tierra Caliente*, and exposed in great heaps for sale in the markets of Vera Cruz. In the tropics—inasmuch as one lives perpetually in the atmosphere of a hot-house—one should by rights be a botanist, but if one is not, the unbotanical reader will perhaps overlook it. The lament of Columbus as to his own shortcomings in this respect is soothing to the unscientific traveller—"As I arrived at this cape (Xumeta)," said he, "there came thence a fragrance so good and soft of the flowers and trees of the land, that it was the sweetest thing in the world. I believe there are here many herbs and trees which would be of great price in Spain for tinctures, medicines, and spices, but I know nothing of them, which gives me great concern." However, as one cannot make his way through a thicket without a certain number of prickly substances attaching themselves to one's clothes, so, in spite of oneself, the names of a few strange fruits will remain in one's memory; such, for instance, are the *chirimoya*, or custard apple, the *zapotes*, and *granaditas*, which are daily set before the traveller in Mexico, in addition to apples, oranges, pineapples, strawberries, mostly of a very inferior quality. In the midst of huge piles of fruits and vegetables, you come upon stalls where half-made Indian dresses for sale, and images of the Virgin, among which those of *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, of which I shall have occasion to speak later on, are always in immense request. Not so much for what is to be seen on the stage, as for the grotesque appearance of the audience, is the theatre at Vera Cruz worth a visit. Men and women alike were for the most part dressed in white; a shirt and a pair of white trousers being considered full dress for gentlemen, while the ladies were attired in white muslin. Standing out in relief against this white background was a sprinkling of black-coated individuals, who looked exceedingly hot and uncomfortable. For the sake of coolness, the sides and fronts of the boxes consist of open trellis-work, so that you enjoy an uninterrupted view into your neighbours' premises. As we had paid six dollars (twenty-four shillings) for a box in the dress-circle, we were not a little surprised to find ourselves next to a party who could not boast of a pair of shoes or stockings among them. In spite of a very feeble performance, the theatre was crammed to overflowing, and the audience displayed extraordinary animation. From the aspect of its theatre, you will find it difficult to believe that Vera Cruz was the headquarters of yellow fever. I could not wish for my bitterest enemy a worse fate than to sleep at Vera Cruz without a mosquito curtain, by an open window, with a "sereno" or watchman immediately below, whose duty it is to spring his rattle violently every quarter of an hour, and shout out into the night the state of the weather—a most senseless arrangement in a country where it never rains for eight months in the year, and rains continually for the other four. Such, alas! was my own lot, which, bad in itself, was aggravated by the annoyance of listening to the regular breathing of my companion, who, within his curtain, bade defiance to the mosquitoes, which, after a few vain efforts to get at so promising a body, devoted their undivided energies to me. Two such nights, I am sure, would have driven me wild. But before I had done with Vera Cruz, I must say one word about its baths, which are deserving of the most unqualified praise. 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infant, had been dandled in the arms of Dr. Johnson's Mrs. Thrale—afterwards Mrs. Piozzi, by birth, what every reader of Boswell will remember her to have been, Hester Salubury, and, therefore, a blood relation of our hero—yet more recently than upon the occasion of the Hyde Park review, took a conspicuous part in a great Court pageant, the last of all the Court pageants, namely, when he appeared, in his breast one blaze of orders, in the gorgeous procession following into St. George's Chapel down at Windsor when the Prince of Wales was married. All through the lengthened career of this grand old soldier we are enabled to follow him step by step, incident after incident, from his cradle to his coffin, through the eight hundred and thirty-seven pages of the Memoirs and Correspondence here portended into these two thoroughly readable and most entertaining volumes. Volumes penned by his faithful friend the Dowager Viscountess, and by her ladyship's congenial collaborator, a young soldier already honourably known in the world of letters as a wielder at once of the pen and of the sword, Captain Knollys of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders, whose who bear in their remembrance the long-familiar form and features of Field-Marshal Viscount Combermere, as he was known to this later generation until he disappeared from the world, only as recently as last year, cannot but read with interest such remote references to him as that, let us say, occurring at page 21 of the first of these two delightful volumes, where Mrs. Thrale—writing under date 1st September, 1774, to the late Field-Marshal's mother, to the mother of the old Lord Combermere, who died but the other day in his ninety-third year—says of him (then an infant)—"Stapleton has come on visibly since we parted; his stays grow tight over the breast, I see, and I advised his maid to put in a gore, as nothing can be more against your liking than such confinement, I am sure." The little mite of a weanling!—with the gore let into his baby-stays by the nursemaid!—He who was afterwards, upon so many a bloody battle-field in Hindostan and the Peninsula, to charge in helmet and cuirass, sword in hand, at the head of his cavalry, a *proux cavalier* like Roland, a *beau sabreur* like Murat, at once a hero and a dandy, true to his ancestral motto, *In Urugue Fortius Paratur*, going into battle as though he was going on to parade, himself arrayed, that is to say, in all the splendour of full uniform, his horse covered with the most sumptuous housings. Following our hero all through this narrative from its opening sentence down to its conclusion, we watch him from every point of view with interest, very often indeed with the liveliest admiration. We have just now seen him in the nursery—hardly out of his cradle. We note next his removal, in boyhood, from home care to the Audlem Grammar School, where he obtains weekly, or weekly tuition (spell it how you please), having there among his companions Vernon afterwards Archbishop of York. We pursue his course, later on, when he is removed to the great college school at Westminster, where he has among his schoolfellows the late Marquess of Lansdowne, then Lord Henry Petty, the late Field-Marshal Strafford, then known as Jack Byng, the poet Southey, Sir Robert Wilson, and Charles Bunbury, son of Colonel Bunbury, the famous caricaturist. He is always, so to speak, tip-top, somehow, in all his belongings and surroundings—this gay, blithe, impetuous, "bright-eyed, young adventurer!" Young Rapid, he is called at home, before he makes his first start in life, or emerges even from the playground. Derided, upon the one hand, as we have seen, from those Saxon Cottons who were flourishing in England before the coming of the Conqueror—descended on the other from those Teutonic Saluburies who came over to England with the Conqueror, and who claimed in fact (these last) to have sprung from a Sovereign Duke of Bavaria—Stapleton Cotton "endowed with one of those iron constitutions more common in his time than in ours" (vol. i., p. 31) contrived with a gay, riant air, as though the Battle of Life were but a pastime to him, to win the nobility his father before him had disdained—nay, to win two coronets, and the marshal's baton, and all the pomp and glories we have before enumerated. How he looked when starting upon the race let the following description indicate:—

"He was well calculated to attract the attention of ladies, for, in addition to agreeable manners and lively and intelligent conversation, he was a decidedly handsome young man. About 5 feet 8 inches in height, slightly but strongly built, and possessing great activity, he was an indefatigable sportsman and an excellent pedestrian, even up to his eighty-seventh year. A swarthy complexion, a profusion of dark hair, thick eyebrows, and bright hazel eyes, shaded by long eyelashes, gave him somewhat of a foreign appearance. His glance was rapid, and the expression of his face good-humoured, though when excited by anger it could be fiery enough; but, to do him justice, this was seldom the case, and any ebullition of temper was generally very transient. The head was small and well proportioned, the nostril open, and the nose aquiline; while a massive Saxon chin indicated the firmness of character which distinguished him through life, and was indeed one of his principal characteristics."

As a companion picture to which, take the subjoined account of him, as he appeared in what to others is the prime of manhood, but what to him was still but his youth:—

"At that time he was thirty-five years of age, and a decidedly handsome man. Of middle height and strongly though somewhat slightly built, he possessed great activity of body, and was an excellent horseman. In his habits he was temperate to an extent not frequently met with in those days, yet without being morose or fastidious. Though naturally hot-tempered, he was universally liked; for, courteous and pleasing in manner, he had ever a kind word for those of his subordinates with whom he came in contact. Cheerful and fond of society, he frequently, during the intervals of active operations or in winter quarters, amused himself by assembling the ladies of the neighbourhood at those little parties called *tertulias* in the Peninsula, at which dancing, music, and flirtation all combine for the entertainment of the guests. Like his illustrious chief, he was a great dandy, though with more success. Resembling Murat in personal enterprise and fearlessness, he also resembled that prince of *beaux sabreurs* in carrying his love of dress into the very field of battle. On the most perilous occasions, he was to be seen attired in the rich uniform of a general of hussars, and mounted on a horse covered with the most gorgeous trappings, exposing himself recklessly to a storm of shot. No notorious was this habit, that it obtained him in the army of Spain the name of the *Lion d'Or*. As calm and cool under the heaviest fire and at the most critical moment as at a ball, his gallantry was so conspicuous that the writer of these pages heard one of Cotton's bravest officers liken, after the lapse of upwards of half a century, his

lamest chief to Ney. Surely no soldier was ever honoured by a more noble panegyric." Enough, however, when all has been remarked. A sketch of him at one time, is a sketch of him at all times—there, at any rate, in all essential particulars. For the man was of a nature that, in one sense, could not grow old, he simply lapsed out of life—he was never superseded. He was the last survivor of all the generals of Wellington. He carried his dandyism with him to the very end—and biddly enough without any derogation whatever from the dignity of his old age, so well both his age and his dandyism became him! His history—told here as it is, gracefully and manfully, by Lady Combermere and by Captain Knollys—reads in parts like supplementary chapters from Froissart. It stirs our heart, as Spencer's verse did the heart of Sidney, as with the sound of a trumpet. The records here given of his gallant deeds form a very history of knightly honours and noble achievements. As the vignette to the title-page of one volume there is a charming sketch, by the hero's relict, of their picturesque home for eight-and-twenty years, his ancestral home for more than two-and-ninety, at Combermere. As the vignette to the other volume, there is appropriately given a companion sketch, this time from a photograph, of the Combermere Memorial, a monument erected in memory of as true a cavalry soldier as ever put foot in stirrup, or charged at the head of his troops, armed *cap-a-pie* in helmet and cuirass, through the stinging smoke and iron storm of a battle-field.

**ARCHITECTURE OF ANIMAL LIFE.**—The architecture of animal life is infinitely more marvellous and oftentimes more beautiful than the most gorgeous edifices reared by the hand of man. We look with astonishment—if we think while we look—on the temples and palaces, and the gigantic constructions of every kind, which his skill, his intelligence, and his industry have raised; on the wide swelling dome, be it of stone or glass; on the graceful, tapering spire, boldly shooting up into the sky; on clustering columns; on ponderous arches, whose shoulders might sustain a mountain. We see stone compactly and symmetrically fitted to stone, each of its appointed size and in its appointed place, while the chief of the sculptor enriches them with cunning workmanship, and transforms the shapeless blocks into elegant proportions, and puts on them the undying emblem of beauty: weeping out of stone and marble garlands of flowers and types of all things lovely, such as those which the deity himself has adorned the great temple of nature—the visible world of his own creation. All these are the works of reasoning, education, and the building according to rules; and last, which science teaches, but which nature has taught the animal, the reptile and the bird, to form, each for its own purpose of safety and domestic comfort, a new fashion of dwelling for itself. A volume of receipts has been published, and they are all pronounced very natty. Darkening the colour seems to be simpler. The use of acetate of iron dissolved in water, and mixed with a little cyreoline, will rub daily into the head, gradually and permanently darken the hair and benefit the health besides, a hint recommended to red-haired beauties when popular prejudice turns against them again, as it will one day.

**DOCTORS.**—A very ingenious lady offered to bet her husband five pounds she would not speak a word for a week. "Do not," cried the delighted husband, instantly putting down the money, which the lady soon took up and put in her pocket, observing *nacely* that she would secure it until the bet was decided. "What! the husband said, 'I have not it already, and required her to forswear. 'Not at all,' said the lady, 'you are mistaken in the time—I mean the week after I am buried.'—*American Paper*.

**CUNNING YANKEE.**—A shrewd confectioner in Waterbury has taught his parrot to say "Pretty please!" every time a lady enters the store. His custom is rapidly increasing.

**RAILWAY SIGNALING.**—Chas. P. Roney has written, on the 12th of June, to the editor of the *London Star* on the above-named topic. The graphic description in your paper of the accident upon the Great Northern Railway furnishes an additional proof that, as long as railway signaling has to depend, either wholly or in part, upon the human mind and human hands, accidents will occur, however near any system adopted may approach to assumed perfection. The "block system," with all its manifold advantages, and the "cable system," proved its lamentable inefficiency last year on the North Kent Railway, as it will do so again on other occasions. It is, in fact, a system of signaling, which is a system of a friend I witnessed in Paris within the last fortnight, that I am induced to ask you to bring it under the notice of the public through the medium of your columns. At a short distance outside the Barriere de l'Hotel, at Paris, the apparatus may be seen at work on a small scale (that is upon a railway of about 180 feet in length); yet it is of sufficient magnitude to completely exhibit the principle and its application. The invention belongs to Signor Visconti, a very intelligent Italian engineer, and the essence of it is that in its working it dispenses altogether with any but mechanical and electric agency. It is a simple and effective system, which, by its simplicity, it is difficult to describe the plan without a drawing, but in main features are the placing of cut-off levers, or cases about sixteen inches high at intervals along a railway varying from 250 to 500 yards. Where the cases are very frequent, the signal is placed on the interior of each box to be a very beautiful but very simple electric apparatus, which communicates with an external electric wire on the framework of the engine wheel, and is directed towards the line of railway along which the train pass. Projecting from the framework of the engine is a perpendicular arm, which is connected by means of a rod and lever with the engine wheel, but, these being no impediment, the train advances as if the arm did not come in contact. As soon as the train has cleared the case, the arm becomes rigid, and so it remains until the train has passed the case, when it returns to its original position. The effect of this is that the signal is a simple and effective system, which, by its simplicity, it is difficult to describe the plan without a drawing, but in main features are the placing of cut-off levers, or cases about sixteen inches high at intervals along a railway varying from 250 to 500 yards. 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